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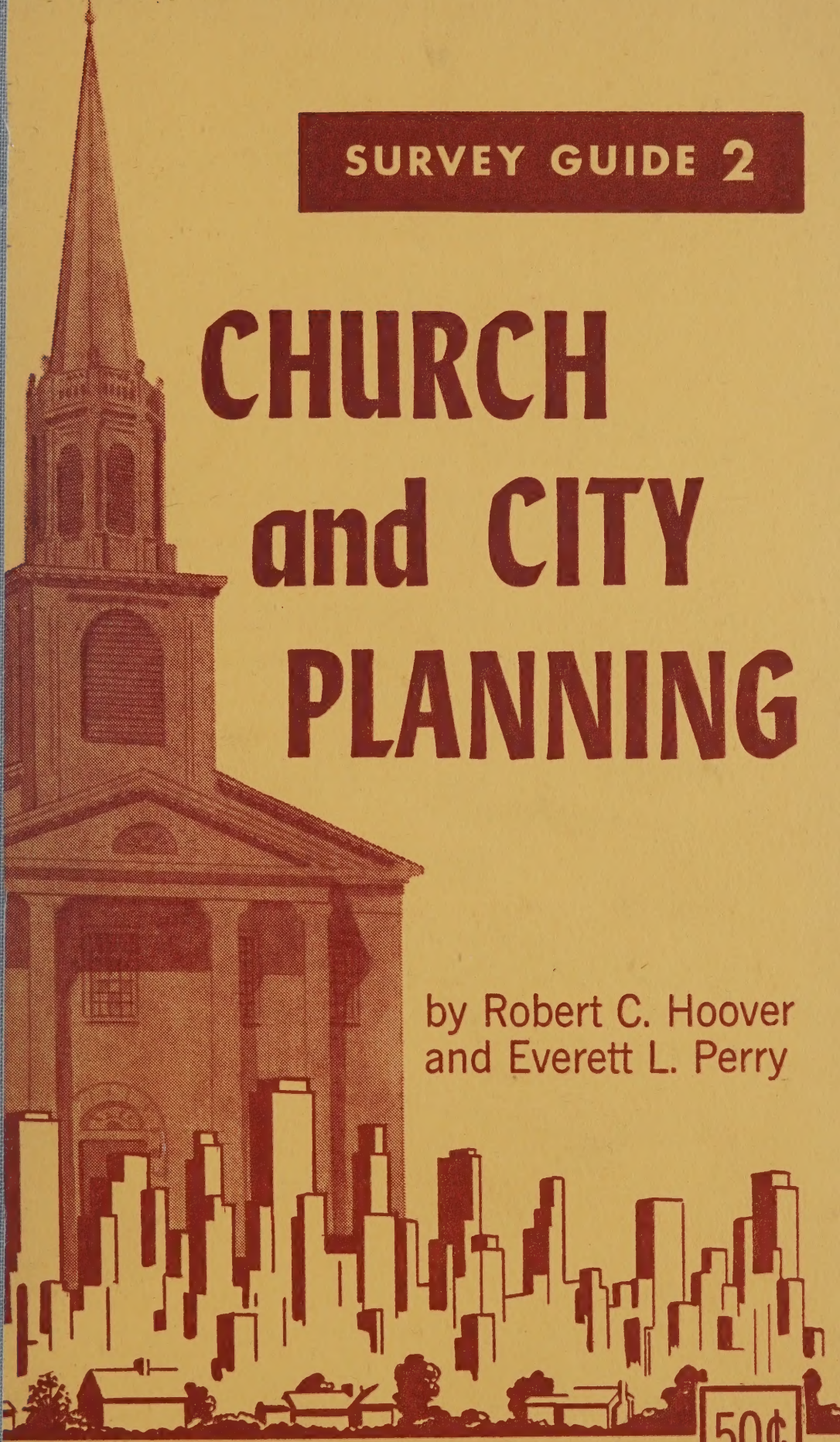
CHURCH and CITY PLANNING



by Robert C. Hoover
and Everett L. Perry

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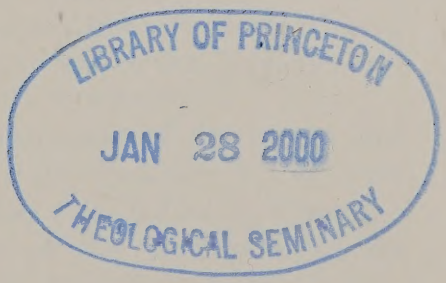
CHURCH and CITY PLANNING

Suggestions for Coordination

by Robert C. Hoover
and Everett L. Perry



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November, 1955

INTRODUCTION

This document is dedicated to the development of mutual understanding between the personnel of the several hundred city, county, and regional planning bodies throughout the United States, and the many churchmen who are actively engaged in planning for the location of new churches, and for adjustment of site, building, and program of already established churches. It proceeds from the conviction that the work of the community planner will be facilitated by an elementary acquaintance with the problems of churching neighborhoods and communities, and that likewise churchmen will be aided by an elementary acquaintance with some principles of city planning.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD

This document was written originally to serve as the basis of discussion between city planners and church planners at the American Institute of Planners Workshop on Church Planning, March 21-April 2, 1955. It has since been revised, and in its present form is designed to serve as a study guide for use by both city planners and churchmen, for the more adequate coordination of mutual interests and concerns.

The following quotation states effectively the objective of church planning as it relates to the over-all growth and improvement of the urban community:[1]

> *"The effective urban church will . . . demonstrate the ultimate purpose of God to reconcile man to God and man to man. It will define its area of service (whether its parish be geographic or selective or both). It will cooperate with other churches to the end that everybody in its area be adequately served. In its efforts to penetrate its area, it will study the needs of its area, develop a suitable Christian strategy, and learn humbly and gratefully as it faces the needs of the community."*

The planned development and redevelopment of the urban and metropolitan environment, stimulated by the Housing Act of 1949 as amended, is based on the national policy established by Congress for the "realization as soon as feasible of the goal of a decent home and living environment for every American family." The Housing Act of 1954 promotes the objectives of urban conservation, neighborhood rehabilitation and redevelopment, and provides funds to assist metropolitan and regional planning.

Churchmen and planners realize that "today we have tremendous new forces for municipal improvement at our disposal . . . directed toward the improvement of localities, the elimination

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[1] Report of Findings Adopted by Conference on the Effective City Church. *The City Church*, May-June, 1955, p. 8.

of slums, . . . and the creation of adequate and decent housing for all income groups, irrespective of race, creed, or color."[1]

Congress has established that federal financial assistance for urban redevelopment will not be given unless slum clearance and urban renewal plans conform to a general plan for the community as a whole.

Private industry is likewise planning new towns in wide open areas where future development is blueprinted down to the last service drive and rose bush.

The urban church stands likely to be deeply affected by the changes in the physical environment occasioned by these planned developments, both in new towns and suburbs and in central-city renewal areas.

Urban Renewal, Its Spiritual Implications

The churchman, from a sense of immediate concern and responsibility, and the professional planner, from a sense of stewardship, view alike the spiritual implications of a program which intimately involves the neighborhood and community where the urban church finds its mission. Can church strategy combine forces with city planning to bring truly a "New Jerusalem in this green and pleasant land"? Or, will today's plans create newness which is functionally efficient, completely decent, safe, and sanitary, but spiritually barren with no room for the church?

The neighborhood needs the church and the church needs the neighborhood in the new communities which are rising on the ashes of the slum and in the new suburbs. Thoughtful church strategists and planners, after a period of aloofness toward each other, have begun to see the common problems and the tremendous achievements which might be possible if they work together.

The planner's search for a spiritual basis upon which to base community plans is well illustrated by the following frank, colorful, if somewhat cynical, statement by Henry S. Churchill, site-planner and architect:[2]

> ". . . *A community is not just an aggregation of dwellings plus a few stores, nor is a neighborhood established by physical boundaries. A neighborhood is an area within which a spirit of neighborliness exists, and in which people do not feel strange. These feelings can be fostered by physical planning but it*

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[1] Feiss, Carl, "Churches and Community Planning," Speech before National Council of Churches, Conference on Church Extension, Philadelphia, May 4, 1953. (To this the authors would add "and irrespective of nationality, culture or any other basis of discrimination in housing.")

[2] Churchill, Henry S., AIA, "Housing and Community Planning," *Seminar Address,* Planning and Housing Division, School of Architecture, Columbia University, reprinted from *Pencil Points,* 1943.

alone cannot create them. If we are really going to rehabilitate our cities we must go deeper than planning for safe side streets and protective green-belts . . ."

Mr. Churchill goes on to say —

". . . *Nor is there any kind of assurance that such areas (housing projects) when planned ever-so-skillfully as economic entities, will develop even the remotest trace of community spirit or neighborly goodwill.*

"*Perhaps it is not necessary that they do. But at the present time nearly all planners are proceeding on the theory that it is necessary. 'The city is a cellular organism,' is the catchword.*

"*Each neighborhood is a cell and each cell makes up particles called communities, and they all add up to the organism called the city. . . .* The only hitch is that no one has yet defined a neighborhood or sought to define the spirit of a community. We talk glibly about something we know nothing about (*underlining supplied*). *Socially, I do that all the time, of course, but as a technician I try to be honest and stay away from hot air.*"

Planners take public responsibility too seriously to assume expertness in fields with which they are unfamiliar. However, the force of events, in the absence of any real church initiative or in the face of church competition, can compel the planner to attempt to develop crudely a sense of social community or else watch the entire urban renewal process founder hopelessly for lack of public support and participation. His dilemma is this: (1) wholesome, constructive attitudes of community-mindedness do not flourish in the evil atmosphere of the slum; and (2) there will be little effective urban renewal or city-planning without a wholesome feeling of neighborliness and community consciousness.[1]

Planning is taking some belated advantage of the helpful techniques of the sociologists in analyzing and promoting community consciousness.[2] However, the basic problem is to a great extent

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[1] From the Catholic point of view this was well expressed by Father Joseph H. Fichter, S. J.:

a. There has been much written recently by Catholics on the notion that one of the basic factors in "de Christianization" has been the "loss of community." It is felt that religion and the Church require as a necessary condition that the spirit and structure of neighborhoods be restored.

b. The basic need here is the renewal of institutions especially in the matter of cultural patterns, social values and mores. Community awareness and responsibility cannot be developed in disorganized slums where the way of life is inconsistent with human dignity.

c. The physical and material basis for the restructuring of the institutions and ultimately of the community lies in housing, recreation parks, streets, garbage removal, and all of the other services expected in a well regulated urban area. These are all contained in the idea of slum clearance and urban renewal.

[2] See: Ravitz, Mel J., "The Sociologist as a Participant in an Urban Planning Program," Vol. XX, *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, No. 2, Spring, 1954.

spiritual and cannot be solved, except superficially, through the blind application of any scientific techniques, be they social or physical. In the language of J. H. Oldham:[1]

> *"It is the worship of God that is the source of all genuine renewal. It is only from His spirit that the impoverished human spirit can receive fresh life. . . . It is His grace and truth which in the last resort guarantee and sustain the personal and cultural values which are essential to the health of society."*

Dr. Oldham continues, pointing to the essential role of the Church in developing genuine community consciousness:

> *"There is nothing greater that the Church can do for society than to be a center in which small groups of persons are together entering into this experience of renewal and giving each other mutual support in Christian living and action in secular spheres. . . . It is in the wide field of rebuilding vital social tissue through the experience of communal living that the direct service of the Church to society can best be rendered. . . . The task of multiplying opportunities of cooperation and of building up small communities with common interests and shared responsibilities may often seem humdrum and commonplace. . . . The strength to persevere comes from the knowledge that relations with persons are the stuff of life and that through loyalty to personal obligations in a multiplicity of individual instances social tissue is being restored and new vitality is being infused into human society. In these relations with other persons we are living man's true life and the results can be left in the hands of God."*

Mutual Importance of Sound Church Location to Church and Community

It appears that the most deep seated and lasting sense of community results from spiritual experience. Generally speaking, this type of experience will occur through the relations of people within the atmosphere of the church. In this sense one mission of the church in the urban community is that of serving as a spiritual focus for the neighborhood. As such, it may perform a function of providing for spiritual and social fellowship of people of diverse incomes, occupations, nationality backgrounds, races, and cultures, if such diverse people live in the neighborhood in which the church is located.

Furthermore, in addition to serving as a spiritual focus for the neighborhood, the church has the mission to serve as the force of spiritual renewal to the city-at-large.

> *"This view sees a new way of Christian service in impregnating with Christian spirit and influence all sides of community life, as Christian men and women, fortified by spiritual*

[1] Oldham, J. H., "A Responsible Society," Vol. III, *The Church and the Disorder of Society*, No. X, Amsterdam Assembly Series, New York, 1948.

faith and fellowship of the Church, take up vocational and voluntary service, care of juvenile delinquents, provision for leisure, etc."[1]

In service as a force of spiritual renewal to the city-at-large it is important to bring people of one neighborhood into spiritual and social fellowship with people from another, and to provide for religious institutions which will have such size and prestige that their voice may be heard and heeded throughout the city and metropolitan area.

These two missions of the church in the urban community — to serve as a spiritual force for the neighborhood, and to serve as a spiritual renewal of the city-at-large — are not mutually exclusive. However, in different situations and circumstances, it will be seen, they will require varying degrees of emphasis. In turn, specific church location may either help or hinder the carrying out of these missions. The selection of the proper combination of emphases in a given planning situation will thus be the decision which will condition sound physical location of the church plant itself.

LOCATION OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD CHURCH

The theories which planners apply to given urban situations are no longer of mere academic importance. These theories are, in great part, determining the form and shape of the city of tomorrow. Streets are being realigned, bridges constructed, apartment houses erected, and community facilities of all types are being provided more or less in accordance with these theories. Most of these theories are making sound sense, e.g., many Protestant church strategists have been giving a major emphasis in recent years to development of neighborhood churches. If the city planner and church strategist cooperate in neighborhood planning, there may be spiritual benefits as well.

Neighborhood Unit Theory

Basic to the discussion of aspects of this co-operation is C. A. Perry's Neighborhood Unit thesis enunciated twenty-six years ago.[2] Some new town developments are adopting his principles almost intact. Partial residential redevelopment and rehabilitation plans under public subsidy usually attempt to adapt this thesis to existing neighborhoods in run-down areas. Highways are being planned more than ever with concern for natural neighborhood areas.

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[1] Urwin, E. C., "New Beginnings in the Relation of the Church with Society," Vol. III, *The Church and the Disorder of Society*, No. IX, Amsterdam Assembly Series, New York, 1948.

[2] Perry, C. A. "The Neighborhood Unit," Neighborhood and Community Planning, *Regional Plan of New York and Environs.* Vol. VII. New York, 1929.

Moreover, much of the literature of the real estate and building industries, such as the National Association of Home Builders, and Urban Land Institute, and the National Association of Real Estate Boards, is influencing private land market operations to utilize the neighborhood unit as a basic module of community development.

Thus church planning agencies are urged to become familiar with the C. A. Perry Neighborhood Theory, embodying the following principles (*See Figure 1*):

(1) Residential neighborhoods should not be pierced by heavily traveled through-streets or traffic arteries.

(2) Residential streets should be light-duty in construction, and so designed, by curvilineation, dead-ending, etc.,

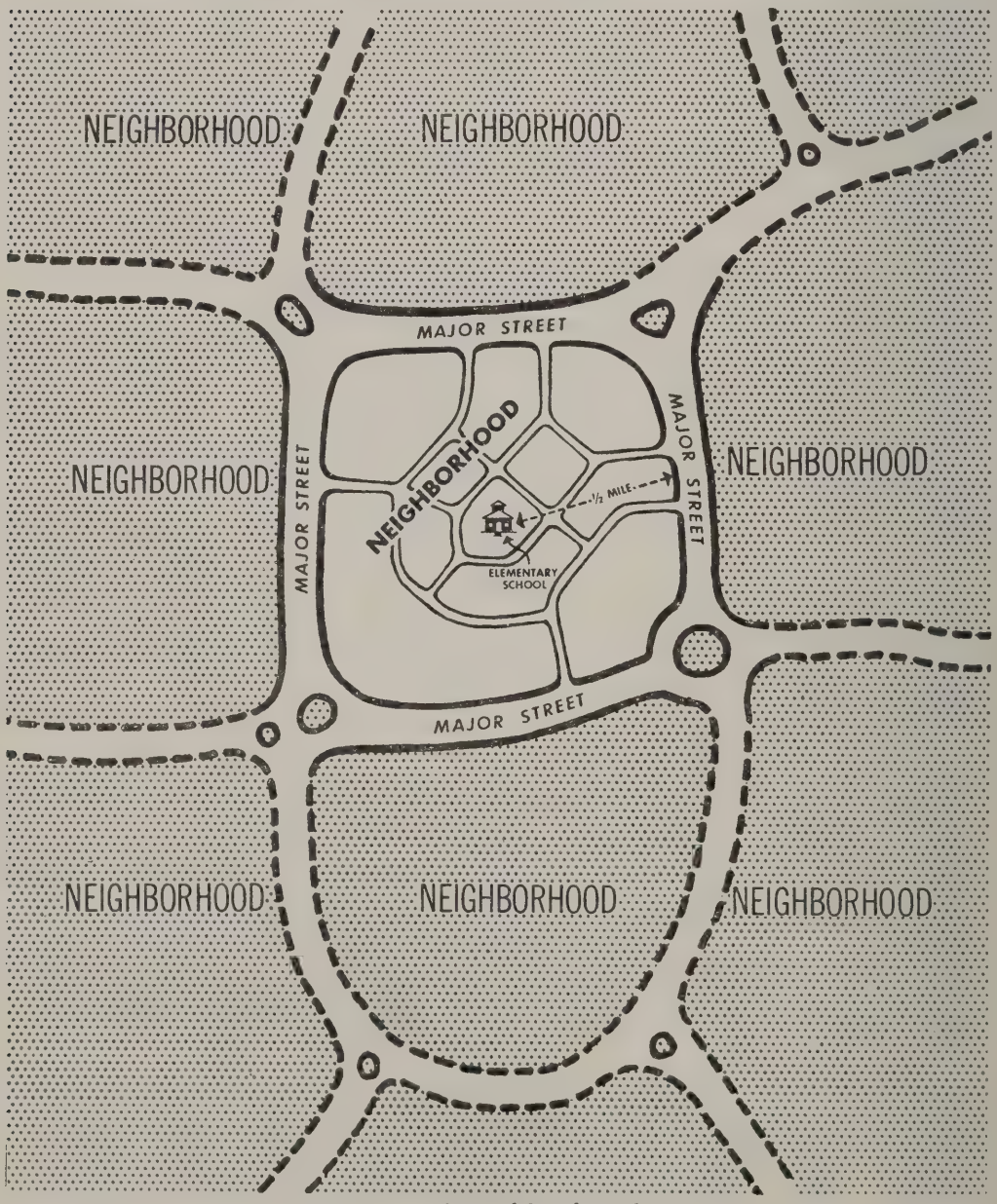

Figure 1. Neighborhood Unit

that they will discourage rapid vehicular through-traffic, thus preserving a quiet, safe residential atmosphere, originating fewer street maintenance costs, and preserving residential real estate values.

(3) Residential neighborhoods should be bounded by heavily traveled major streets to prevent such streets from crossing residential areas.

(4) The neighborhood should have at its center a central park or green with the elementary school as its focal point. Thus children in lower grades would not be required to cross major traffic arteries on their way to school.

(5) The radius of the neighborhood should be no greater than one-half mile, the walking distance considered maximum for grade school children.

(6) The population of the neighborhood should be about 5,000 persons because that is the number which would support an elementary school population according to school standards at the time Perry developed his thesis. (Perhaps this number would be somewhat reduced by current elementary school enrollment standards.)

This would provide a basic physical unit for residential living. It would be an island of homes and related facilities surrounded by by-passing major streets. It was designed to keep small children alive by keeping them away from traffic hazards; to keep residential values intact by preserving a quiet atmosphere for homemaking. The physical elements of the Neighborhood Unit Theory are shown in Figure 1, which depicts a single neighborhood in detail as it is related to other neighborhood units in its immediate vicinity.

Community Facilities Under the Neighborhood Unit Theory

Within the neighborhood unit, there would be designed provision for necessary institutions, including churches, schools, shops, branch libraries, parks, open spaces, etc. The general rule applied to the location of these facilities was as follows:[1]

(1) Church and institutional sites "having service areas coinciding with those of the neighborhood should have central positions (i.e., near the elementary school on the central green), and those which draw people from outside the neighborhood should be at or near the boundary . . ."

(2) Shopping districts should be located "on the circumference of the unit, preferably at the traffic junctions and adjacent to similar districts of adjoining neighborhoods."

Stated in its simplest form, location depends upon the extent of the service area of a particular institution. If the service area coincides with the boundaries of the neighborhood, as in the case

[1] Perry, C. A., *Ibid.*

of elementary school, *the institution* would be located at the neighborhood center.

In contrast, a junior or senior high school, designed to service several neighborhoods, would be located at the periphery of a residential neighborhood, not within it.

As will be discussed at greater length below, in connection with central and peripheral neighborhood churches, it appears to be sound planning that church locations be selected by use of this same principle, the position of the church site within the neighborhood unit being dependent upon whether the church service area is designed to coincide with the neighborhood, or to extend over several neighborhoods.

Number of Churches in a Neighborhood Unit

Reasoning that the federal census of 1916 showed a church congregation for every 1,500 persons in the urban population, and one for every 1,200 in 1926, C. A. Perry proposed a three-church neighborhood: (1) one liturgical church and one nonliturgical church to be located on the common green at the neighborhood center; and (2) one church at a major intersection to attract membership via major streets from outside the neighborhood unit.

The comity statement, "Urban Comity Principles," as approved by the Department of the Urban Church of the National Council of Churches defines present-day standards for adequacy of churching at 2,500 to 4,000 people per church.[1] Since it is necessary to reserve land for churches in advance, else there will be no practical possibility of locating within the neighborhood plan, it is probable that the general population formula proposed by C. A. Perry may be accepted as a point of reference, to be modified as needed under specific circumstances.

Central and Peripheral Neighborhood Churches

Basic to the matter of planning for churches is the distinction already mentioned between the church which is designed to serve one neighborhood unit and the church which is designed to serve more than one neighborhood. The extent of the service area and the relative importance of its functions have inevitable implications for the geographical location of the church with reference to the neighborhood pattern.

Thus, before the question of location can be resolved, the planner must know whether the particular church is to serve a specific neighborhood, or whether it will seek to serve many neighborhoods.

Because of the heterogeneity of most American urban neighborhoods, seldom can one church serve all people, or even a

[1] The National Conference on Church Extension recommended a downward revision of these figures to one church for each 1,500 to 2,500 persons.

majority of an entire neighborhood. At least among the three major religious groupings in America — Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Jewish — there is relatively little possibility of mutual exchange of constituents, except through conversion. Within each of these three major divisions there are further subdivisions of denominational or ethnic character which tend to limit neighborhood service.

In many instances, however, there is sufficient homogeneity of at least one segment of the neighborhood population that it is a distinct possibility for a church to serve one neighborhood. (*Figure 2.*) Within Protestantism under comity agreements, one denomination is frequently assigned a particular neighborhood, wherein its has the responsibility of serving all resident Protestants in so

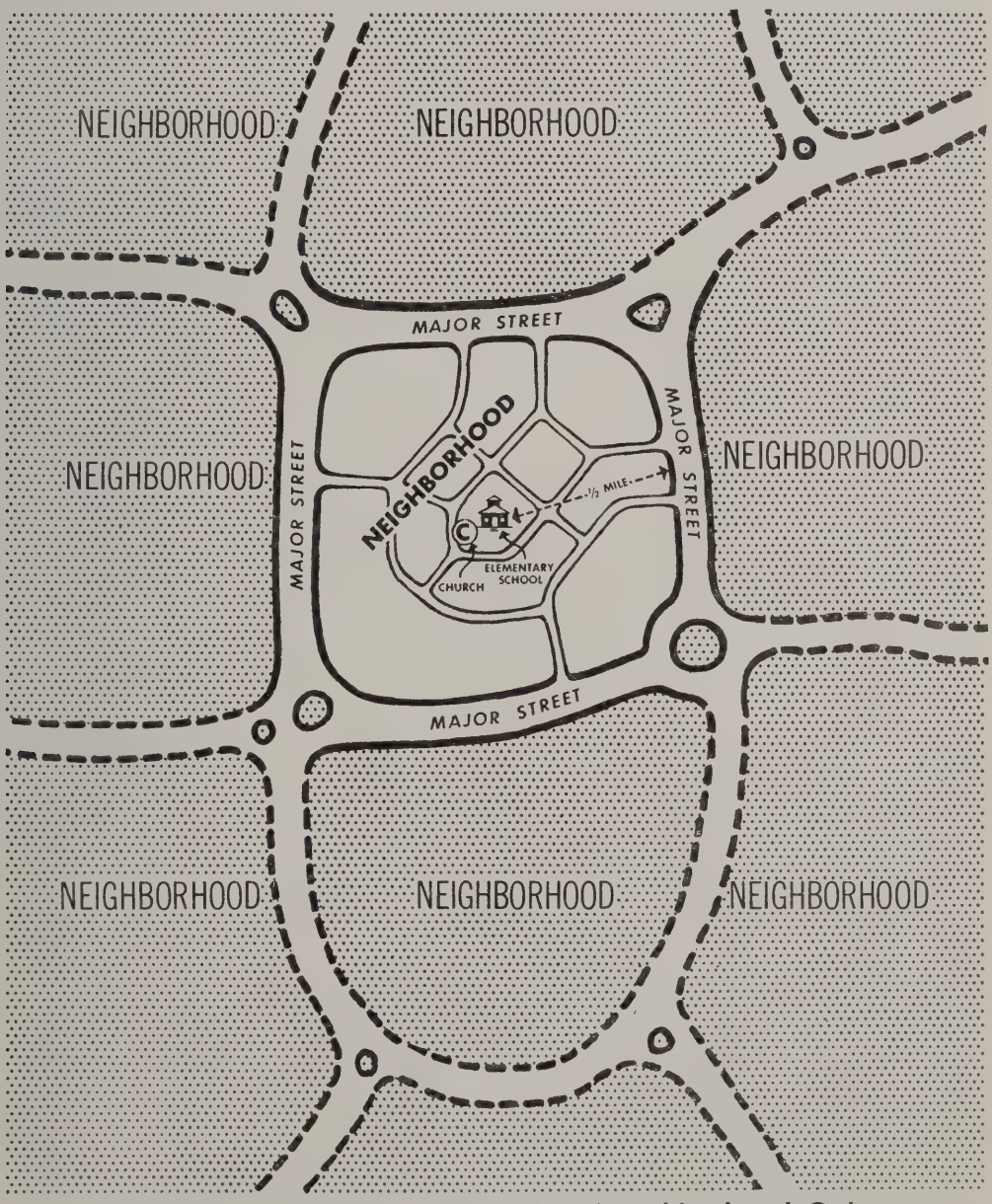

Figure 2. Church Serving One Neighborhood Only

far as possible. There are, of course, some major denominations in American Protestantism which do not participate in comity agreements. For the cooperative denominations, in such cases, it is obvious that the church should have a location central within the neighborhood, from which it will have the best possible opportunity to serve as a spiritual and social focus for the neighborhood. If such a church performs this function effectively, it will be able to draw together people in the neighborhood who may be of diverse economic, denominational, or ethnic backgrounds, and in so doing may contribute significantly to the organization and integration of much of the neighborhood's social life.

However, this requires that the comity arrangement be firm and lasting and that there be no danger of later reversion to a multi-neighborhood church. If the arrangement is tenuous, with possibility of comity breaking down or of radical change in the neighborhood population, the peripheral location is safer for a church designed to serve one neighborhood.

On the other hand, there are numerous instances in which such neighborhood-oriented institutions are not possible. If a given neighborhood is so heterogeneous that a particular church could not attain significant size to meet the financial and program requirements which are placed on a local church, then it may of necessity have to draw members from other neighborhoods. (*Figure 3.*) In some instances, as for example in the Roman Catholic Church, size requirements may make impossible the confining of a church service area to one neighborhood.[1]

In some "one-class" neighborhoods more cross-fertilization *is possible* between people of various occupations, economic levels, and ethnic backgrounds if a church draws some of its constituents from outside the immediate neighborhood. On the other hand, the possibility that such a church will be selective of constituents of one economic level or of one denominational background, may prevent the cross-fertilization of spiritual experience which is theoretically possible. Furthermore, there are churches which select people on the basis of a paritcular theological emphasis or ethnic background with little if any attention to the neighborhood.

In such instances, in which a church through its desire to serve a particular constituency, through lack of a sufficiently homogeneous group in one neighborhood *from* which it can draw, or from a desire to serve most effectively in the cross-fertilization of spiritual experience on an interneighborhood basis, the location such as that of the shopping center, at the periphery of the neighborhood unit, is most suitable. (*Figure 4.*) In such a loca-

[1] In a letter addressed to the Rev. Joseph W. Merchant, June 2, 1955, the Rev. Joseph H. Fichter, S. J., noted that "the normal urban Catholic parish is a territorial unit which contains from five to ten thousand parishioners."

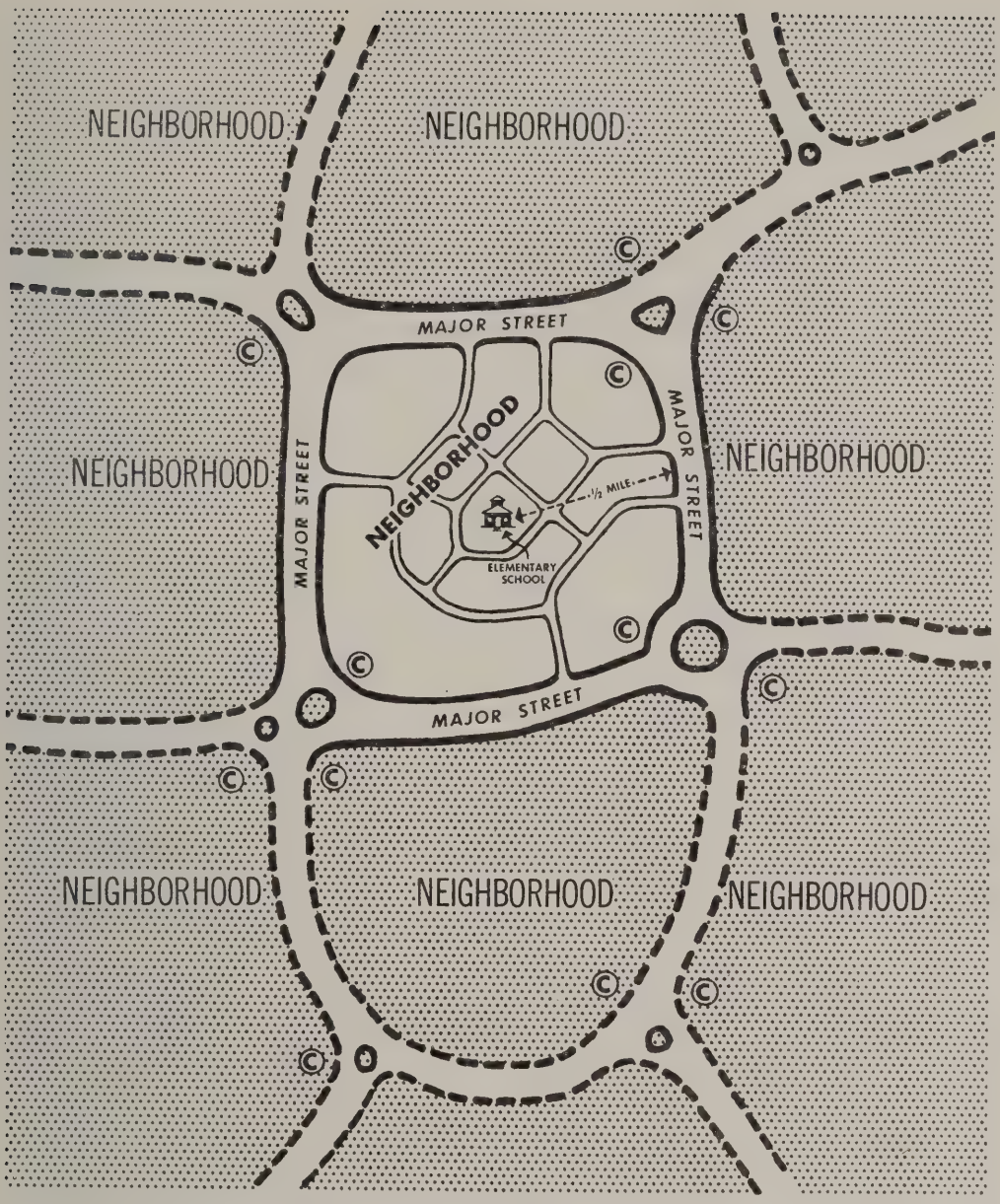

Figure 3. **Location of Churches Serving More Than One Neighborhood**

tion the residential interior of the neighborhood is not invaded by much automobile traffic from outside the neighborhood. Moreover the church is then in a position where it will be visible and can thus more easily reach beyond the bounds of its neighborhood.

Thus, unless there is a reasonably good prospect that a church can permanently serve one neighborhood only, without undue competition, church locations should be near major traffic intersections where maximum advantage may be taken of public transportation, perhaps the off-street parking facilities of the shopping centers, and general superior visibility to the traveling public.

Such a location may, of course, involve competition with commercial site values. It may also mean that some persons in the

neighborhood will need to travel to other neighborhoods to worship in churches of their choice, as no one particular neighborhood would be likely to provide a complete range of denominational churches from which to choose. This situation is depicted in *Figure 3.*

Figure 3 shows that best corners for peripheral churches also tend to have high site value for retail business purposes. Unless these churches are sponsored or sites reserved for them in the original site plan, they may be difficult to place in positions of maximum advantage at a later date because of high land costs.

For example, in a recent shopping-center redevelopment plan, it was estimated that re-use value of the land would be $3.00 per square foot. A three-acre church site at this price would be $392,000.

In summary, religious diversity of the American city, while a complicating factor in church planning, is to be appreciated rather than deplored. To allow both for neighborhood integration and for meeting a diversity of religious needs it is probable that, except under most unusual circumstances, each neighborhood unit should have at least one church in the neighborhood center serving primarily the neighborhood, and one on the periphery, near the major traffic arteries, the latter to serve on regional or community rather than on neighborhood basis. Thus, churches can be placed where location may help rather than hinder their basic missions.

Denominational types within the Neighborhood Plan — A Responsibility of Churchmen.

As noted above, C. A. Perry recognized two major types of churches, the liturgical and the nonliturgical. The wide variety of denominational organizations engaged in church extension activities, and of religious background and inclination of people living in any one neighborhood tends to complicate the situation further. In some way, the interests of these several denominational organizations, and of the people who live in the neighborhood, must be given a tangible expression in the neighborhood plan.

The city planner and the church planner are in agreement that it is not the proper function of the city planner to determine which denominations are represented in a given neighborhood, or which of these shall be central or peripheral in the neighborhood plan. This responsibility rests squarely upon the shoulders of churchmen and is a responsibility which can be met only through cooperative action. An interdenominationally functioning comity, church planning and strategy, or church adjustment organization which works continually and closely in cooperation

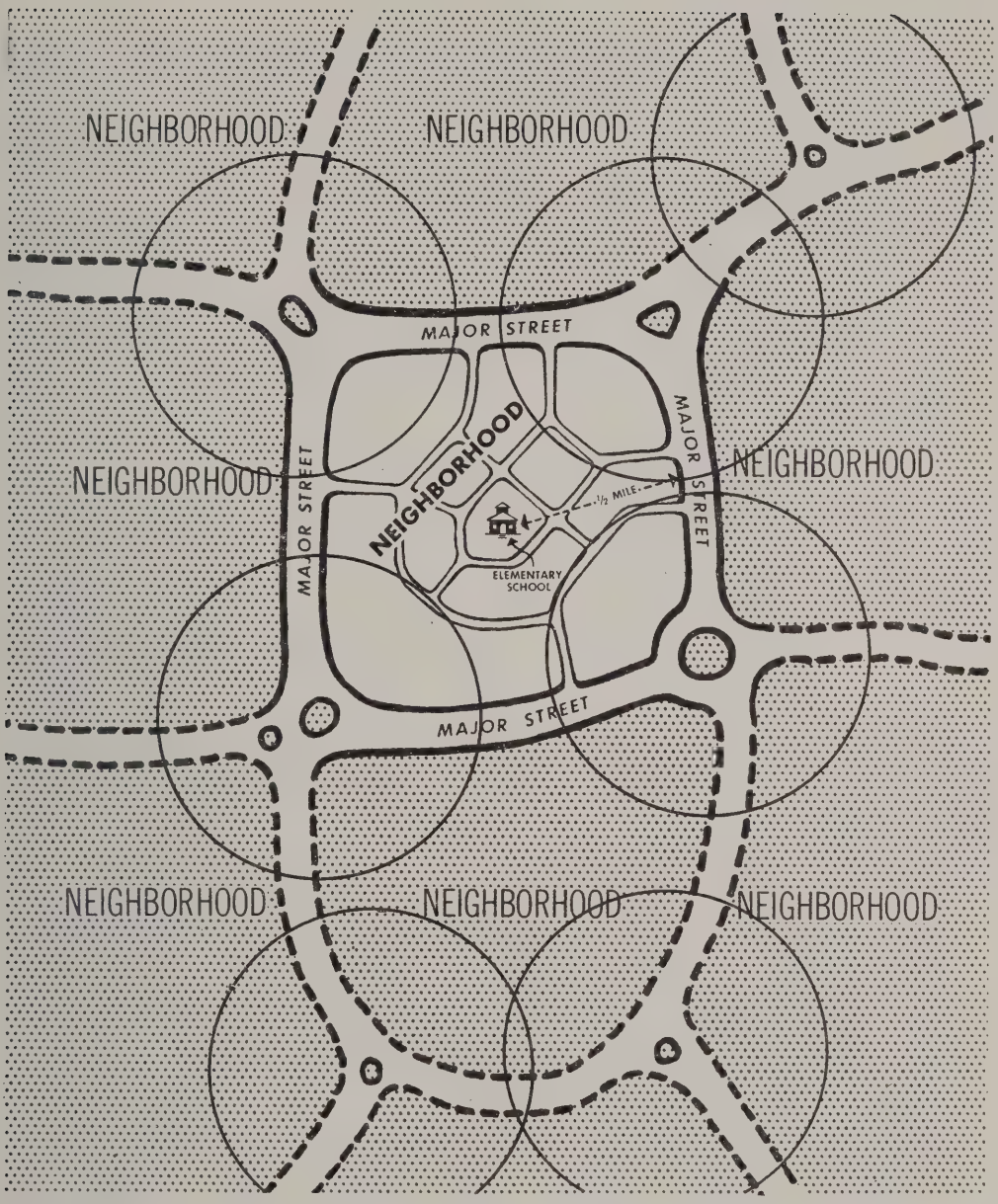

Figure 4. Major Street Intersections — good location for shopping centers

with the city planner is essential to the development of an adequate plan for churching any given neighborhood.

It is not our purpose in this paper to spell out specifically the most adequate structure of such an organization, nor to spell out a rigid set of principles which will permit easy and automatic decisions in specific cases. There has already been much experience along both these lines. Actually, interfaith as well as interdenominational coordination is ideally demanded, although such coordination is not easily achieved in practice.

We present the following as preliminary guiding principles for such determination of denominational types:

(1) The church interests and background of people living in the neighborhood should be an important consideration.

(2) The development of at least one central neighborhood church within each neighborhood unit may be accomplished in one of a number of ways:

(a) If the neighborhood is relatively homogeneous in religious background, the central neighborhood church may well be of that denomination.

(b) If the neighborhood is heterogeneous in religious background, the central neighborhood church must be one which can serve a fairly heterogeneous segment of population. In many parts of the country a denominational church which in its basic approach is equipped to serve the religious needs of a diverse population is given a comity assignment to serve the neighborhood in behalf of all the cooperating denominations. The federated interdenominational church and the nondenominational church have in some instances attempted to perform a similar neighborhood integrating function.

(3) Denominational churches which are equipped to serve only a small segment of any one neighborhood should be located on main arteries, on the periphery of the neighborhood pattern.

(4) In determining the churching of any one neighborhood unit, the wider churching of the sector or region must be considered. If a church of denomination A is located peripherally to one neighborhood unit, a church of denomination B would probably be located on the periphery of an adjoining neighborhood unit, rather than another church of denomination A. This pattern of "regional distribution" of churches would permit maximum opportunity for selection of a church to meet the needs and interests of people within a group of neighborhood units.

Implications of the Neighborhood Unit Approach for the Local Church

In the light of the decisions reached concerning denominational-types and their geographical location within the neighborhood plan, certain responsibilities devolve upon the local church, if the plan is to be effective. Again, in the scope of this paper we can only draw broad outlines.

(1) The central neighborhood church, if it is to remain true to the task and responsibility involved in its location, must sincerely and effectively provide a spiritual center of activity for the neighborhood unit. It would bring to

bear, in a very specific sense, the spiritual influence of the church on the people within the neighborhood unit, all of whom would be within a half mile of its doors. The central location would provide opportunity for released time religious education in well equipped and up-to-date classroom facilities for elementary school children in close proximity to their public school plant, without the necessity of a mile, round-trip walk to a church in a peripheral location in that neighborhood or to another neighborhood. The central neighborhood church could provide a modest, dignified worship center where the much neglected function of "enter-rest-pray" could be made more attractive by location on a quiet green away from the rush of traffic and the bustle of commercial activity.[1] This type of church could become a center of neighborliness by virtue of the socials, fetes, and neighborhood meetings which could be held in its building or sponsored by it, and by its interest in neighborhood improvement and the solution of neighborhood problems. In other words, it could be a focal point for the application of its basic spiritual concern to the social problems of the neighborhood.

(2) The peripheral neighborhood church would avoid the temptation to set up competing functions for the neighborhood unit, and would seek to supplement and enrich the total churching of this and adjoining neighborhood units. In this sense close cooperative program planning by churches in the same or immediately adjacent neighborhood units is demanded.

(3) Over a period of time opportunities for major adjustment of program or sponsorship may well be made necessary by virtue of population shifts. The local church, the sponsoring denomination, and the interdenominational church planning and adjustment committee should be ready to effect such adjustment when needed. In some instances a simple program adjustment may be demanded; in more radical changes the sale of building and equipment to another sponsoring agency, or to another group of people may be the proper solution.

A Design for the Future

Specific situations will call for tailor-made church location plans, such that no single rigid blueprint can be devised. However, it is advisable to contemplate a general pattern of churching within a neighborhood unit which might be considered optimum.

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1 "Wildly revolving between the two poles of exhausting work in the pursuit of power and exhausting play . . . we find neither time nor strength for those deep reflective qualities of being which have hitherto been esteemed as distinctive of man's soul. In such an age, what chance has religion to be heard or heeded?" John Haynes Holmes, *The City Church,* January, 1952.

A well balanced combination of facilities in one neighborhood unit might usually include either two or three churches, one (or two) of which may be centrally located and the remainder located at the periphery of the neighborhood on major traffic intersectional sites.

Within this general framework the specific locations might be worked out in a number of ways. As illustrative only, we submit the following possibilities:

If people of one of the three major faiths — Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Jewish — constitute a distinct majority of the population of the neighborhood, the central neighborhood church should probably be of that majority faith. If the neighborhood church comprises two major population segments of the above faiths, each might be represented. If Protestantism is in a distinct majority, two central churches might be included, of such types — possibly liturgical and nonliturgical — that the maximum number of persons would be served within the neighborhood. Peripherally located churches should thus comprise sects of more limited appeal in that neighborhood or sector of the city, and other denominational churches such that a balanced denominational distribution will be achieved in the larger community or sector, for the convenience of people who wish to attend a church of their specific denomination.

Within this general framework, if conditions and circumstances permit some such arrangement, it should be possible to provide a balanced institutional framework for neighborhood religious nurture and development with adequate provision for free religious choice.

The Stake of the Church in Helping Draw the Design for the Future

As pointed out above, it is the responsibility of the church through its denominational and intedenominational agencies, now existing or to be created in the future, to meet the city planner halfway in working toward the development of a coordinated and well balanced structure of churching neighborhoods. Likewise it is the responsibility of the city planner to recognize the fact that no city plan is complete if it omits from its planning the facilities which will provide spiritual nurture of the future city. He, too, must recognize the basic spiritual needs, which are just as real as the needs of physical environment, and be willing to meet the church planner halfway, so that neighborhood facilities will be complete for service to the whole range of human need. It is at the point of size and placement of physical facilities that this type of coordination can best occur.

Even beyond this area of coordination is one which goes deeper into the root of the matter. Church and community are so interrelated that the kind of church depends quite largely on the kind of community, and the quality of neighborhood living likewise is directly dependent upon the type of churching. Indeed, the church's obligation to provide moral and spiritual leadership is a vital factor in community betterment. Thus, from the point of view of the church, it is not enough for one denomination, by chance or through connections, to procure what it considers to be a fine site in a new neighborhood, or even to operate through a local council of churches to achieve the same objective. The church has a stake in the kind of neighborhood which city planners and real estate people project. We will draw one illustration of this relationship.

The ideal of serving people from all walks of life is common to many, if not all, churches. If central neighborhood churches, in particular, are to serve neighborhood units, they will serve those people who live in a neighborhood unit. If the neighborhood unit comprises one economic level, one ethnic group, or is otherwise exclusive, the church will almost inevitably be the same, unless it can to some extent buck the social tides and attract constituents from other neighborhoods. Thus, in many instances if the church is to express, in its fellowship, the inclusive character of the gospel it preaches, churchmen have a responsibility to see to it, not only that adequate church sites are secured, but that the neighborhood unit, as planned, permits this expression.

Thus, there is the danger that both neighborhood unit and neighborhood church will be ingrown, isolated, and parochial in their attitudes. In such cases, the church fails to secure the tangible expression of its ideals within the structure of a neighborhood unit and the peripheral location is obviously more suitable.

On the other hand, peripheral churches may also be exclusive in their selective type of outreach. Locational advantage may be used to draw from several neighborhoods a membership more distinguished for its social status, income identity or other superficial characteristics than for any genuine sense of unique spiritual community.

Locational planning can never be any real guarantee against wrong or misguided church orientation. Nevertheless, it should be remembered that location does affect the ability of the church to accomplish effectively its highest and most appropriate mission.

THE CHURCH OF THE CENTRAL CITY

The urban metropolis is a single, living organism. Wherever blight occurs at the center or in the suburbs it can leave a path of disease, social disorganization, unstable property values, and

general neighborhood deterioration which, if unchecked, may in time undermine the entire regional structure.

Basic, therefore, to any scheme of coordinated church strategy and urban renewal or redevelopment is the recognition that the problem of churching an urban area is a completely metropolitan issue.

Two Types of Central City Churches

Admitted oversimplification places central city churches in two broad categories: (1) the inner cty or transitional neighborhood church, and (2) the downtown church located in the central business district.

In many cases, it will be found that specific churches partake of the characteristics of both types in varying degrees.

The Inner-City Church in a Transitional Neighborhood

The inner-city or transitional neighborhood church is generally a center of worship which was established for a neighborhood which has now changed character. It now stands in a "zone of transition" marked by rooming houses, cheap hotels, indiscriminate apartment-house conversions, catch-penny commercial and industrial uses, and unkept vacant lots resulting from demolition or structural collapse.

In some instances the inner-city transitional neighborhood church may have peculiar historical or monumental characteristics. A church in point is St. George's Methodist Church of Philadelphia, a historic shrine of Methodism, so important for traditional reasons that the original plans for the Delaware River Bridge were realigned in order to miss the church structure.

Some "first churches" are located in transitional neighborhoods rather than in downtown areas.

Urban Renewal of the Central City and the Transitional Neighborhood Church

The federally aided urban renewal programs aim to eliminate the deterioration which often surrounds the inner-city church through a combined strategy of slum clearance and redevelopment, conservation of existing sound structure, and general stiffening of building code and housing law enforcement.

If inner-city blight is caused by a fundamental shift in the economic character of the area from residential to an industrial, commercial or other nonresidential use, redevelopment should not, of course, be residential. If, however, the highest and best re-use of the area is for continued residential use, a new neghborhood unit on the cleared site may be justified.

If redevelopment is industrial or commercial in character, churches in such areas may have to relocate, merge or federate

with others, or be dissolved. Where residential redevelopment is clearly indicated, the existing church structure may sometimes be saved. Through provision of necessary parking facilities and green area, it may then be physically integrated into the neighborhood re-use plan.[1] The principles to be utilized for location of such churches have been discussed above.

Since redevelopment involved complicated problems of population relocation, it may occur that the clientele of a church in a redevelopment or renewal area will change radically, but will demand continuing service to the area, if the church is to meet its responsibilities. In this event, existing church structures may not fit into the re-use plan for the neighborohod, either on the present site or on a new site within the redeveloped area. Some criteria are already in use by local planning agencies for making this judgment:

1. Is the plant of sound construction?
2. Is the plant functionally adaptable to its mission in the redeveloped neighborhood?
3. Is the church's program oriented to the needs of the people who will live in the neighborhood after redevelopment is completed?
4. Does the church have the resources to implement an appropriate new program?
5. Is the church prepared to pursue a program of nonsegregation appropriate to a publicly subsidized redevelopment project?
6. Is the building architecturally harmonious with the redevelopment plan?

If complete clearance is not undertaken, sound planning dictates that code enforcement and rehabilitation measures be undertaken on a neighborhood-unit basis. This involves the planned utilization of the existing church structure as an agency of spiritual support and encouragement to the general area-conservation program. Reorientation of the church outlook may require a revitalized program of service and evangelism to the neighborhood as it now exists, rather than as it once was. This can mean subsidization of nonself-supporting churches and the provision of specialized staff for nontraditional programs. However, it seems quite logical that the demand for this type of denominational subsidy be weighed and considered before all funds are earmarked for suburban church extension. In the long run, the urban outskirts will deteriorate if the core of the metropolis is rotting.

Inner-city areas of transition are in need of interdenominational cooperative planning to decide which church will remain and

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[1] See: Broome "County Planning Board," *State-Chenango Redevelopment Project,* Binghamton, N. Y., December, 1953.

which will leave and to insure that adequate programs are maintained for the area.

The Downtown Church

Certain churches, located downtown, are in neighborhoods of yesterday that are no longer, in the strict sense, transitional. They have substantially passed through the transition to a use which is frequently related to the cultural and commercial operations of the central business district.

Frequently these churches represent the physical origin of the several historic branches of organized religion in the metropolitan area. Membership of some may have decreased radically as older families have departed to attend suburban churches. Membership of others may have increased if adjustment to the downtown situation has been successful.

Most important, is the unique community challenge facing these grand old institutions. Standing at the center of retail business, local government, cultural and entertainment activities, and within earshot of the centers of organized crime and vice; with a strategic proximity to the transient-population of a highly mobile civilization; and with untold opportunities to minister to the daylight population of the commutation-center of the metropolis, the downtown church is needed today more than ever before as an instrument of metropolitan-wide spiritual renewal.

In the smaller metropolitan centers where the time-distance between central city and suburb is not too great, the downtown church may still draw membership effectively from among commuting suburbanites. This provides the possibility for mixing of all social strata and income groups under one church roof, which may be considered perhaps one of the greatest opportunities for spiritual democracy ever enjoyed by any society.

The Downtown Church and City Planning

Looking at the history of Protestantism in the larger metropolitan areas, we find that as a small city becomes a large metropolis pressure is exerted on the downtown church, which then sometimes relocates to a residential area, merges, or dies. For instance, First Presbyterian Church of Chicago has moved six times in its history, and is now located eight miles south of the Loop. Of the numerous downtown churches which once existed in downtown Chicago, only two or three remain.

The downtown church must be near lines of transportation to all parts of the city, and at the hub of business activity. In this central business district land values are so high that in most cases a decision of a church to withdraw is irrevocable, from a financial point of vew. Thus, such churches should withdraw only after careful study, and with the assuranrce that service to the major

faiths, and for the major denominational types, will be continued. While theoretically each denomination might wish to preserve a downtown church in every major city, it may not be financially possible, nor strategically wise, to do so.

The churching of the downtown must be viewed ultimately in terms of the services needed in the more immediate geographical environs, leaving "first church" or "voice church" functions to be performed among some denominations by churches of the transitional areas or even of the suburbs.

The downtown business area is more a center of metropolitan interest than it is the center of any particular neighborhood. The residential neighborhoods in or near downtown will be assumed to be served by the inner-city church described above. To some extent, the downtown church may also serve such neighborhoods. However, the cardinal responsibility and mission of the downtown church itself seems generally to resolve itself into four major tasks: (1) service to a constituency which may be scattered throughout the metropolitan area; (2) the function of a "voice" for the particular faith or denomination; (3) service to transients and newcomers to the city, who are drawn to the downtown church by its visibility and accessibility within the central business district; (4) service to daytime residents of the downtown area who may live in the suburbs.

Lacking sufficient indigenous support and/or denominational subsidy, it should be decided cooperatively which churches are to remain and which are to move out or be dissolved. Only by such cooperative planning can the downtown area be assured of adequate churching.

In some instances federating of Protestant downtown congregations has aided in maintaining a strong service center and witness in the downtown area. The First (Federated) Presbyterian Church of Fort Worth represents two Presbyterian branches in the downtown area of that city. It is not inconceivable that similar cooperative arrangements might bridge other denominational lines and serve to strengthen the church approach to the downtown area.

Furthermore, it is possible that some kind of *Metropolitan Church Center* might be developed in some downtown areas, to continue programs for the major faiths or for major denominational groups. Certainly it offers some interesting possibilities.

The Metropolitan Church Center concept might include the following, as illustrative of its form:

> Housing of the offices of denominational units and of the local council of churches, and perhaps the Roman Catholic and Jewish metropolitan headquarters.

The Center could provide the variety of services connected with the better developed councils of churches, such as leadership education, information clearinghouse, coordination of church social work and clinical services, research and survey. The Center could provide services to the hotel transients and others by bringing special guest speakers for Sunday evenings, and otherwise.

It is characteristic of this concept that the Metropolitan Church Center would be a service center to perform those functions in the downtown area which could better be performed that way than by numerous struggling separate churches.

Other variations in approach may be devised, but the objective in planning is that of maintaining, in the downtown area, a strong service center and hub of the whole church approach to the city.

THE SUBURBAN CHURCH

The greatest mass migration in history is the movement of people, business, and industry from the core areas of our 168 metropolitan districts to the suburbs. This trend, made possible by the development of rapid transit facilities and the internal combustion engine, has been accelerated by government policies of decentralization for new industry, recently developed mass building practices and the threat of atomic attack.

Underlying the recent trend of increased suburbanization is the trend toward reduced densities of land use in the older inner-city areas. Redevelopment, public housing, code enforcement, arterial highway construction, new parks, parkways, and public improvements tend, on the whole, to reduce central area densities of occupancy.[1] Thus, suburbanization and central area renewal and redevelopment are the inextricably interwoven strands of the seamless metropolitan web. Consequently, despite any short-run gains, church planning which underemphasizes the churching of either the suburbs or the central city will probably be damaging to the church and the secular community alike.

Suburban Population Growth Estimates

Statistical projections *per se* of suburban population growth will seldom prove accurate or very helpful for church or city planning. Suburban growth can be turned on and off by building booms, government policies of mortgage underwriting, industrial tax write-off and private lending practices. Ultimate population growth as well as growth by a target year, is required for estimating space requirements for future institutional sites, whether for churches, schools, or play areas. Church strategists and city planners should cooperate closely in making these estimates.

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[1] Except perhaps in New York City!

Future developed area should be determined for each section of suburban land lying in the path of emigration from the central city.

Likely neighborhood areas within this future developed area may next be discerned from an analysis of "bounding features" such as (1) projected arterial highway routes, (2) railroads, (3) major streams, lakes, rivers, drainageways, swamps, etc., (4) areas of excessively steep slope for urban development, and (5) other features which will probably limit, hence bound, the neighborhoods within the future developed area.

Once future neighborhood areas are outlined, the *ultimate population of each neighborhood* can be estimated by determining the density of development most likely to take place. Review of densities permitted in local zoning ordinances or, in the absence of zoning, generally practiced by subdividers or permitted by deed covenants in the area, and the density of nearby existing and comparable development, should help in determining the number or future homes likely to be built within each future neighborhood.

The future neighborhood population can then be estimated by multiplying the number of future homes by the prevailing number of persons per family. Finally, a generous allowance should be added to provide for unanticipated growth, unpredicted increase in zoned density, apartment house developments and similar causes for a larger neighborhood population than is now forecast.

The end objective of this analysis is an estimate of the number of people the church may be required to serve, not for the next ten years but perhaps for the next hundred. If land is not acquired now, before housing construction, in adequate quantity to provide for future church development and expansion, land prices may skyrocket and the opportunity to acquire an adequate site will be forever lost. On the other hand, if adequate sites are acquired and it later appears that there is a surplus of land left over after all church needs are fulfilled, the church can almost always sell the land at a profit, if the area is one of growth.

It is most important to secure land. It is not feasible to invest funds for building or to start services until some resident population is assured.

Presently the Church Federation of Greater Chicago is working on a cooperative basis in allocating areas, many of which will be developed only in the distant future. The Detroit Council of Churches, in cooperation with city planners, has also planned for serving communities still on the drawing boards.

Suburban Population Characteristic

Young children and their parents characterize the suburbs. Theirs is an insatiable demand for more elementary schools, play

areas, bedrooms and extra bathrooms, velocipedes, sand piles, etc. Life in the suburbs is centered in the main around child-raising and the socio-economic problems of the young family.

Young suburban families may attend the central-city church by commutation. This attendance frequently slackens as children come and the problems of dressing and making the long trip to the city-center becomes increasingly tedious. Those families with little church background may remain permanently unchurched if there is no suburban facility made available.

Effective suburban church strategy must, therefore, aim to make suburban church attendance physically convenient. It must appeal to the unchurched suburbanites. It must recognize and minister to the deep concern of the suburban family for the welfare of its children. Finally, it must recognize and take full advantage of the less formal mode of living which prevails in many suburban sections.

A Suggested Suburban Strategy

This estimate of the situation leads to these suggestions for the consideration of church strategists in suburban situations:

(1) First, organize a church planning committee which includes representation from as many denominations as are willing to participate. This might well be within the structure of the local council of churches, if there is one, or it might be a step toward the organization of a council of churches.

(2) Make a study of the probable future neighborhood structure of areas peripheral to the presently built-up areas, taking into account barriers, highways, etc. This study should be made in close cooperation with planning agencies. In larger metropolitan areas adequate study will demand the employment of local research personnel, as already exists in New York, Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia, Detroit, Washington, Los Angeles, and Portland.

(3) Acquire, if possible on a unified interdenominational basis, sites as far ahead of actual development as possible. In each neighborhood unit at least two sites should be secured prior to subdivision. One of these should be near the neighborhood center and the other at one of the intersections of major trafficways which bound the neighborhood unit.

(4) Some type of interdenominational agreement should be reached which will permit the starting of services at the earliest moment that such services are needed, but without a denominational commitment until the characteristics of the population can be determined.

(5) As soon as substantial settlement of the neighborhood is achieved, a decision should be made concerning the more

permanent sponsorship of the first work, allocations to other denominations, or the abandonment and sale of sites which are found not suitable, and/or the acquisition of alternative property.

This is far different from the frequent scramble to acquire and develop denominational church sites in the choicest high income suburbs. It calls for a rational and cooperative approach to the common problem of churching the suburbs. It may require that considerable sums of money be made available in some way for interdenominational use so that land can be purchased in advance of full-development land values, but parceled out on a reasonable allocation basis only after the neighborhood is sufficiently settled to determine the denominational population distribution. The Westchester County (New York) Church Planning Commission is presently seeking the means of doing just that.

The suggested strategy does not commit entire neighborhoods to an institutional pattern poorly fitted to the people it is designed to serve. It recognizes the simple economic fact that when denominations scramble for new church sites in a competitive manner, they are inevitably bidding up land values on the properties they hope to acquire. Such is the challenge for cooperative action in the field of new church development.

COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CHURCH AND CITY PLANNERS

The public character of the city planning agency must be kept in mind, as well as the social values of diversity in American democracy and our rightly cherished freedom of religious choice.

If observed, the practice of church-state separation will greatly enhance the usefulness of the church and the public planning agency each to the other. No clandestine pipelines should be necessary between the planning agency and the church strategy board. All data in the planning office are in the form of public records, paid for by taxes. Planners only ask that the church and other agencies make use of what is available.

Types of Data Available from Public Planning Agencies

Planning agencies usually welcome the opportunity to discuss development problems with all kinds of community groups, including church groups. Planning studies and public planning records are available to all church officials who will take sufficient interest to put them to work. These include:

1. Population studies and forecasts.
2. Economic base studies.
3. Physical data.
4. Origin-destination traffic data.

5. Master plan studies for future land use, public facilities, public utilities, streets.
6. Maps of existing land use and utility systems.
7. Central business district analyses.
8. Urban renewal surveys and plans.
9. Recently issued building permits.
10. Recently reviewed approvals of subdivision plots.
11. Other similar studies and records.
12. Data maps.

Technical Planning Assistance to the Churches

To make most adequate use of the wide variety of data available from the usual city planning office, the churches must of necessity have available to them personnel who know the meaning and significance of ordinary city planning concepts, and can interpret them to the various church bodies. In some instances, as in Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia, Washington, and in Massachusetts and Oregon and a few other states, there are Protestant research and survey personnel who are available for this interpretative task. On a national basis, the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. and several of the denominations, including American Baptist; Congregational Christian; Lutheran; Evangelical and Reformed; Methodist; Protestant Episcopal; Presbyterian U.S.; and Presbyterian, U.S.A., have research personnel familiar with church and city planning problems.

Furthermore, the possibilities of utilizing city planners in their frequent role as interested and concerned church laymen should not be neglected. As a consultant to a council of churches comity or church strategy and adjustment committee, the services of such a layman may prove invaluable. Even as a church layman, however, the city planner should not be expected to be able to provide all specific answers to church strategy, unless he has had previous acquaintance with the handling of such problems. His greatest value will usually be found in the providing of a careful community analysis upon which a sound church strategy can be based.

SITE STANDARDS AND CRITERIA

Standards can be helpful if they are applied with common sense and good judgment. They should not be used in disregard of local limitations and circumstances. Neither should minimum standards become, in practice, psychological maximums. Actually there are economies of open space which might be enjoyed by placing the church in juxtaposition to a school site or a shopping-center green-belt. However, if the church is providing all of its own grounds and surrounding green space, *three acres* certainly appears to be minimum if not stingy.

On the other hand, if the churches wait to acquire property until areas are substantially built up, it is frequently financially impossible to acquire even this size property. The churches can take a leaf from the educators' book in this respect. Public schools have recently come to recognize the importance of adequate site acquisition well in advance of actual development. School sites vary from ten to twenty or more acres if they meet modern standards. It will be well for the churches to seek sites, where possible, at vacant land prices. Unless the site selection and purchase are well in advance of the bulldozer, the opportunity to obtain sufficient land for normal future growth may be permanently lost.

Off-Street Parking Provision — Not Amenable to Uniform Standards

The provision of off-street parking must not be made in accordance with rigidly applied standards, or great harm can be done to both the church and the neighborhood.

The previous description of the Neighborhood Unit Theory carefully pointed out that the neighborhood interior is to be set aside as a safe, quiet refuge for home life, free from the disturbances of high volume vehicular movement. The neighborhood is designed for the safety of young children. Its physical dimensions are such that people within the area may normally walk, not ride, to the neighborhood center.

Therefore, a minimum of off-street parking should be provided around church institutions located at the geographical center of the neighborhood. This will encourage walking and discourage vehicular penetration.

However, parking for the peripheral denominational churches is an entirely different problem. They rely on major streets to bring their membership to worship. For the needs of this type of church, the recommendation of the Conference on Church Extension seems adequate. The Conference suggests 100 square feet of off-street parking for each member of the congregation. This is the equivalent of one-car-space for each three members.[1]

It is probable that for general application a formula relating off-street parking space to seating capacity rather than to membership would be more practical, particularly as many churches use both sanctuary capacity and off-street parking for two or more Sunday services. Off-street parking requirements range from one-car-space for ten seats to one in three.

This underlines the importance of a very cautious approach when considering the possibility of a church location near the neighborhood center. If comity agreements break down, or if popu-

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[1] Sanderson, Ross W., *Condensed Report, Conference on Church Extension*, 1953, New York, National Council of Churches, p. 26.

lation shifts result in a radically different religious complexion of the neighborhood unit, the centrally located neighborhood church may find itself in a very unfavorable location. Lacking access to major trafficways, such a change will result in either death of the geographically central institution or the invasion of the neighborhood unit by undesirable vehicular traffic originating both within and without the neighborhood itself, as former constituents, now living at a distance, return to the old location which has become functionally obsolete. This would be a complete negation of the Neighborhood Theory, and a sure depressant to residential land values.

Nuisances Resulting from Inadequate Church Site

Churches which do not provide adequate green area, off-street parking and open space around the building can become environmental nuisances. This is especially true of churches which draw large crowds for various meetings.

The milling of church-going pedestrians along crowded city streets after a large wedding, funeral, mass, or worship service can be a positive hazard to public safety. Likewise, the church can contribute to dangerous congestion of trafficways if it encourages its membership to double-park and engage in other illegal practices by poor initial site-planning.

Area-Requirements

There is no common uniform agreement as to the adequate size of a church site.[1] Certainly the size of the site will depend upon

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[1] The following are some standards which have been recommended. Several feel that the minimum recommendations of the Church Extension Conference were too low:

Source	*Acres Recommended for Church Site*
1. Conference on Church Extension Standards based on:[a] (below)	
0-400 membership	1 acre
400-800 membership	2 acres
800-1,200 membership	3 acres
1,200 or more members	4 acres
2. Presbyterian Board of Missions[b]	3 acres (on the average)
3. Urban Land Institute[c]	3-5 acres (Preferably near a shopping center)
4. Van Osdal[d]	5-6 acres (for a 600 seat church with 150 parking spaces)
	8 acres (For a Catholic church with a parochial school)

[a] Sanderson, Ross W., *op. cit.*

[b] Perry, Everett L., Selections of a Church Site, *The City Church,* September, 1953.

[c] Urban Land Institute, *Community Builders Handbook,* 1954, p. 89.

[d] Van Osdal, N. K., Jr. "The Church and the Planned Community," *The City Church,* May, 1952.

the size of the church which is being projected, and the scope of the program. If an outdoor recreational program is desired, that will increase the size appreciably. If a parochial school is to be included, this will mean another appreciable increase in site needs. In most cases, landscaping and off-street parking should be provided for.

Further neighborhood damage can be caused by sounds emanating from a church which is inadequately screened from nearby properties by plentiful green space, trees and appropriate landscaping. Industries are sometimes enjoined by the zoning ordinance against emitting more than a given number of decibels at the property line. For example, light industry in one city has been permitted to emit no more than sixty decibels, and "all noise must be muffled so as not to become objectionable due to intermittance, beat frequency or shrillness.[1] Churches certainly have a right to use church bells, carillons, and recorded music in their ministry, but would do well to make every effort to avoid creating conflict by their use.

Membership Standards

C. A. Perry estimated that a population of 5,000 persons could probably support three churches of about 1,500 persons each.[2] The Conference on Church Extension suggested one Protestant church for each 1,500 to 2,500 persons.[3] It should be noted that on the national basis about 60 per cent of the population may be expected to affiliate with a local church. In the western region this percentage is considerably lower. Thus, on the average, a population of 1,500 might be expected to produce a church of 900 constituents, disregarding the churching of some people outside of the neighborhood, and internal heterogeneity of the population which may cut the degree of affiliation to one specific church.

Many urban churchmen believe that a church of about 500 members is the optimum size of a neighborhood institution, while a downtown church, to support a diversified staff and program, may need 1,500 or 2,000 or even more.

Once again, we are warned against slavish application of standards. Overriding and compelling reasons may justify retention of a church of much less than 500 members. Churches of historical or traditional importance, or those performing a specialized min-

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[1] Excerpt from zoning ordinance prepared for Warren Township, Michigan (just north of Detroit), by Waring and Johnson Planning Consultants, see: Waring, Malcolm F., "Performance Standards in Industrial Zoning," *Planning*, American Society of Planning Officials, 1952.

[2] Perry, C. A., *op. cit.*, pp. 72-75.

[3] Sanderson, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

istry not related to the persons enrolled in its membership may fall into this group.[1]

It is a responsibility of the church administrators to decide on the membership standards which they expect their churches to achieve. Otherwise there can be no basis for deciding how many sites must be reserved for church use in any one neighborhood unit. There may be, and probably are, some differences in membership standards from one region of the country to another, and between various major faiths and denominations. For instance, taking extreme examples, one of the more radical sects may be expected to operate normally with 100 constituents or less, while an urban Roman Catholic parish may consist of five to ten thousand persons.[2]

Visibility

Church and community can benefit from the placement of churches at points of visual advantage. Placed at strategic intersections, churches can act as pleasing terminal features for major streets, thus enhancing their symbolic significance as agencies of spiritual renewal.

Middle-of-the-block locations where the sides are obscured by narrow alleys or party walls are unimpressive. A corner lot is better. However, close proximity to a public square, school play yard, or a green-belt buffer will magnify the open space provided on the site and thus constitutes a very desirable situation.

The location of the church on ground somewhat higher than surrounding buildings will aid visibility if the foreground is protected by zoning, protective planting, on-the-site protective land area, or deed restrictions from high buildings which might obstruct the vista.

Other Precautions

The usual precautions should be taken in purchasing a church site which are employed in buying any other type of land. The land use should be checked, both on the community zoning map and the master plan. Previously issued variances and rezoning ordinances should be checked to make sure that there is no "hidden zoning" which does not show on the regular zoning map.

The services of the architect and the engineer should be obtained before site selection and purchase. Special precaution should be taken to ascertain the stability of the soil, possible flooding at high water, and the feasibility of storm and sanitary drainage installations and water supply.

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[1] See: pro and con of this issue: Cutler & Shippey, "Small City Churches — Goal or Problem?" *The City Church,* January, 1952, p. 8.

[2] Letter from Father Joseph Fichter, S.J., June 2, 1955.

CONCLUSIONS ON THE APPLICATION OF PLANNING PRINCIPLES TO CHURCH LOCATION

Churchmen should note that a large number of city planning and urban renewal projects are employing the Neighborhood Unit Theory in one form or another. Even in the many areas in which the Neighborhood Unit Theory is not officially used, there are schools, shopping centers and main arterial highways which are often so located that they confirm the theory giving this discussion relevance.

Planners, not being arbiters between religious denominations, cannot always be certain that the church facilities will be adequate in planned neighborhoods unless the church takes some initiative in the community planning process. This requires closer working relationships between the leaders of the church community and city planning agencies.

Dangers Inherent in the Misapplication of the Neighborhood Theory

Like any other theory, the Neighborhood Unit Theory may be turned to selfish ends and made to confound the public interest.

Neighborhoods may take on the tyranny of social outlook which has been found in some small towns where a premium is laid upon absolute uniformity of outlook. The church, in this situation, could become the instrument of misdirection by making the neighborhood exclusive rather than inclusive in its outlook.

There will always be the danger that a homogeneous one-church neighborhood will freeze out newcomers and turn the church into a cozy introspective spiritual club.

Likewise, the selective approach of the peripheral neighborhood church can be perverted to serve narrow purposes. The privilege of drawing communicants from more than one neighborhood should be used to strengthen the work and programs of the major churches. It should not be used to promote look-alike, act-alike congregations based on superficial considerations of income-grouping, or racial or ethnic identity.

The Correct Application of the Neighborhood Theory Can Be Useful to Church Strategists and City Planners

It has been our purpose to demonstrate how the Neighborhood Unit Theory can be used by church strategists and city planners alike to work cooperatively for neighborhoods in an urban metropolitan setting, which are physically sound and spiritually oriented.

Reservation of adequate sites at the neighborhood center can facilitate the more adequate development of the "neighborhood spiritual focus" function of the urban church. Likewise reservation of adequate sites on the periphery of the neighborhood near

shopping areas and at the intersection of major trafficways will help to preserve the "spiritual renewal" function of the urban church. In this way a proper balance of churching may be achieved, providing for both the neighborhood integration on a spiritual basis and for the inter-neighborhood cross-fertilization so vital to Christian community growth and health.

Mutual and Interrelated Problems of the Downtown Church and the Suburban Church

The emphasis on the interrelationship between central-city and suburb has been stressed in this discussion. The strategy suggested would aim to preserve denominational identity and vitality, respect and honor for the work of our downtown churches, and coordinated expenditure of extension funds on central-city and suburban church construction with due regard to the needs of the entire metropolitan church community.

The possibilities for a strengthened and coordinated approach to the downtown area through cooperative development of strategy to decide which churches will continue with the downtown task, or possibly to develop some form of metropolitan church center, has been described in broad outline.

The relevance of the neighborhood unit approach to redevelopment areas in the inner-city, as well as to new suburban areas, has been noted.

A strategy for conserving financial resources by purchasing future church sites at undeveloped land prices has been sketched with a broad brush.

Despite the great amount of study and effort that has gone into the scientific study of the church in the past quarter century or more, with the work of the Institute of Social and Religious Research, the Committee for Cooperative Field Research, the Committee on Field Research of the Bureau of Research and Survey of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., the field research and survey offices of various denominations and of councils of churches, and the work of various seminaries, it must be concluded that the art and science of church location is in an early stage of development. The amount of basic research which remains to be accomplished is of staggering proportions. The number of tangible factors in most planning situations is still very great. It can be hoped that community planners and church planners seek increasingly a more basic mutual understanding, and develop more effective modes of cooperation in this field which is so important for the well-being of both church and community.

Some Aspects of the Task Ahead

This guide is designed, not to give final answers, but to begin the blazing of some trails in a land where there are still many

fields with stump rows, if not virgin forests. The following issues stand out as needing most immediate consideration, if such co-operative planning becomes effective:

(1) City planners, subdividers, and builders need to become generally aware that a physical plan for a city or for a neighborhood is incomplete unless it includes adequate provision for the facilities to meet the spiritual needs of the people.

(2) Churchmen need to become generally aware that in co-ordination of their extension efforts with city planning there is the possibility of more effectively churching urban America, and that city planners generally welcome such cooperation.

(3) The requirements for relating church strategy to city planning almost necessitates the strengthening and the more effective functioning of interdenominational agencies. Local church councils should be encouraged to employ additional personnel who can interpret city planning to the needs of the churches, and to use city planners whenever possible, on comity or church planning and strategy committees, in their role as church laymen.

(4) Within some such general framework as has been presented in this paper it is the responsibility of churchmen, cooperatively, to determine:

a. What types of churches in regard to neighborhood orientation and denominational affiliation should be founded in a neighborhood, and

b. The size that these churches should be, which in turn has implications for the number of churches.

(5) Churchmen must realize that they have a real stake in city planning, not only in the securing of church sites but in translating into physical plans for the city the relevant spiritual goals of the churches.

(6) Further research on specific aspects of the broad field of city planning as they relate to the broad field of urban church strategy is most urgently needed.

A suggested list of future study projects include the following:

a. The church and urban renewal, redevelopment, and neighborhood rehabilitation.
b. The church and suburban subdivisions.
c. The relationship of the church to zoning, building codes, housing codes and police-power enforcement agencies of city planning.
d. Organizational relationships for coordination between church and city planning agencies.
e. The church and super-highway planning.
f. Criteria of site size, membership size, spacing, etc., used by local councils of churches, planners, and denominations.

g. Coordination of church strategy with the city master plan.
h. Organizational patterns for coordination of church and city planning in local areas.

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